

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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TAGS: PFOR, JO

SUBJ: INITIAL JORDANIAN EDITORIAL AND PUBLIC REACTION TO GOJ
"FREEZE" STATEMENT

1. SUMMARY: GOJ-SPONSORED EDITORIAL OPINION SEP 23 RE SEP 22
HASHEMITE COMMUNIQUE DEPLORES POSSIBILITY
OF JORDAN'S BEING ISOLATED, AND STRESSES HOPE FOR
FUTURE RECONCILIATION AMONG ARAB BROTHERS. INITIAL PUB-
LIC REACTION APPEARS TO BE APPROVAL OF PLO REPRESENT-
ATION AMONG REFUGEE CAMP INHABITANTS, APPREHENSION
AND CONFUSION AMONG MORE PROSPEROUS PALESTINIANS, AND
EMBARRASSMENT FOR KING BUT RELIEF AT POSSIBILITY OF
BEING RID OF WEST BANK PROBLEM ON PART OF EAST BANKERS.
END SUMMARY.

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2. JORDAN'S GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS PREDICT-

ABLY SUPPORTS GOJ SEP 22 STATEMENT FREEZING
FURTHER ME PEACE MOVES UNTIL RABAT SUMMIT. OFFICIAL
GOJ PAPER AR-RAYY NOTES SEP 23, "JORDAN'S PAR-
TICIPATION IN THESE EFFORTS IS BASED ON JORDAN'S
RECOGNIZED RIGHT TO RESTORE ITS OCCUPIED LANDS,
BUT ONCE JORDAN'S ROLE AS REPRESENTATIVE
OF THESE LANDS IS SHAKEN, JORDAN WILL
LOSE THE SUPPORT OF WORLD PUBLIC OPINION...THE
COMMUNIQUE ISSUED IN CAIRO APPEARS TO BE INTENDED
BOTH TO UNDERMINE THE BASE FROM WHICH JORDAN MAY
MOVE, AND TO NEGATE THE VALUE OF ANY SUCH MOVES..
THE BASIC PROBLEM IS THAT OF THE LOST LANDS, BUT UNFORTUNATELY
THE ARAB DIALOGUE HAS BEEN DIVERTED TO MATTERS OF SECONDARY
IMPORTANCE. THE ARAB EFFORT TO GIVE THE PLO THE TITLE OF SOLE
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IGNORES
THE COMPLICATIONS WHICH STEM FROM THIS ATTITUDE,
AND WHICH EFFECT JORDAN'S ESTABLISHED ROLE WITHIN THE
FRAMEWORK OF ARAB STRATEGY".

3. WEST-BANK-ORIENTED AD DUSTOUR: "THE CAIRO
STATEMENT VIOLATES A NUMBER OF PREVIOUS AGREEMENTS,
AND JORDAN'S ISSUING THE COMMUNIQUE IS A NATURAL RE-
ACTION. EVEN THOUGH THE CAIRO STATEMENT OUSTED JORDAN
THE CENTER OF THE POLITICAL INITIATIVE, IT
SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE JORDANIAN REPLY WAS
MODERATELY WORDED AND LEFT THE DOOR OPEN FOR
RETRACTION AND RECONCILIATION, INSTEAD OF EXPOSING
THE ARAB RANKS TO TOTAL COLLAPSE. THE LOGICAL WAY
TO AVOID A HARMFUL CRISIS IS TO TRANSFER THE PROB-
LEM FROM THE HANDS OF THE FOUR ARAB PARTIES TO
THOSE OF THE WHOLE ARAB WORLD...THE MAIN QUESTION
IS, IF ATTEMPTS TO OUST JORDAN SUCCEED, WHO IS A
VIABLE SUBSTITUTE? THE PROBLEM IS HEADING TOWARD
AN IMPASSE WHICH REQUIRES CANDID ANSWERS. OTHER-WISE, WE ARE
SERVING THE CAUSE OF ISRAEL."

4. INITIAL PALESTINIAN REACTION IN JORDAN APPEARS
TO RANGE FROM GLEE AMONG YOUNGER CAMP DWELLERS AND/OR
THOSE WHO LOST RELATIVES IN 1970 FIGHTING, TO APPRE-
HENSION AND CONFUSION IN RANKS OF MORE PROSPEROUS,
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BETTER-ESTABLISHED PALESTINIANS.
PALESTINIANS IN REFUGEE CAMPS WHO WELCOME CAIRO
ANNOUNCEMENT DO SO FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS; RESIDUE
OF HATRED AGAINST KING HUSSEIN STEMMING FROM 1970
FIGHTING, OR LINGERING HOPE THAT PLO REPRESENTA-
TION MIGHT MEAN AN ESCAPE FROM CAMPS AND RETURN TO
FORMER HOMES ON WEST BANK. IT IS DIFFICULT TO DE-
TERMINE HOW WIDESPREAD IS THIS ATTITUDE IN CAMPS,

BUT AT ANY RATE, CAMP POPULATION IS MINORITY OF PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN. MORE PREVALENT REACTION BOTH IN AND OUTSIDE OF CAMPS IS ONE OF APPREHENSION AND CONFUSION. ANCIENT RUMOR HAS BEEN RESURRECTED THAT GOJ PLANS TO RELOCATE CAMPS DEEP IN DESERT OR SEAL THEM OFF PHYSICALLY. UNIVERSITY-EDUCATED PALESTINIANS EXPRESS CONCERN FOR FUTURE FROM POINT OF VIEW OF BECOMING A PEOPLE WITH EVEN LESS LEGAL STATUS THAN THEY NOW POSSESS, SINCE IT GENERALLY ASSUMED THAT ECONOMICALLY WELL-ESTABLISHED PALESTINIANS WOULD REMAIN ON EAST BANK; "HOW CAN THE PLO REPRESENT US IF WE ARE LIVING UNDER KING HUSSEIN?" ATTITUDE FOR NEAR FUTURE IS ONE OF NERVOUS WATCHING AND WAITING.

5. EAST BANKERS TEND TO RESENT MOVE AS YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF EGYPTIAN DECEPTION. (SYRIA DOES NOT INCUR SAME PUBLIC WRATH, SINCE SOMEHOW SYRIA HAS NEVER BEEN CONSIDERED AS TWO-FACED AS EGYPTIAN REGIME. REACTION SEEMS TO BE, "AT LEAST SYRIA HAS NEVER BEEN HYPOCRITICAL ABOUT DISLIKING JORDAN)". MANY, PARTICULARLY YOUNG EAST BANKERS, REGRET EMBARRASSMENT TO KING HUSSEIN. YET AT SAME TIME, OLDER, HARD-LINE EAST BANKERS EVIDENCE ILL-CONCEALED RELIEF AT POSSIBILITY OF JORDAN'S HAVING BEEN HANDED EXCUSE TO RID HERSELF OF WEST BANK THORN-IN-SIDE. COMMENT HAS BEEN HEARD THAT KING DID NOT GO FAR ENOUGH IN HIS ANNOUNCEMENT AND SHOULD HAVE DECREED DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT IN ORDER THAT NEW ELECTIONS WOULD SWEEP OUT PALESTINIANS. HARD-LINE EAST BANKERS CONCEDE LIKELIHOOD OF COMMUNIST DOMINATION OF ANY INDEPENDENT WEST BANK STATE, WHICH MIGHT EVENTUALLY EMERGE, BUT FEEL THAT ITS BEING WEDGED BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL WOULD NEGATE ANY THREAT TO EAST BANK, AT ANY RATE, THEY SAY, COMMUNISTS AND THEIR PALESTINIAN SUPPORTERS COULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE CONTAINED, RATHER THAN "SCATTERED AMONG US ON THE EAST BANK."

6. WHILE OVERALL EFFECT OF KING'S ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BEEN TO DREDGE UP SOME DEEPLY-FELT DOMESTIC FEELINGS, THERE IS LITTLE LIKLEHOOD OF ANYTHING BEYOND COMPLAINT AND TALKS. ALL PARTIES ARE WAITING FOR DEVELOPMENTS AT RABAT SUMMIT. PICKERING

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